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Neither Fish nor Fowl. How EU Delegations Challenge the Institution of Diplomacy: The Cases of Moscow and Washington

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Abstract

The paper explores European diplomatic cooperation abroad since 2009 by studying the diplomatic structures and practices in two key locations, Moscow and Washington. It analyses the functions of EU delegations as part of the hybrid EU foreign policy system and their way of engaging with the changing global patterns of diplomatic practice. The empirical analysis draws on extensive semi-structured interviews conducted in Moscow and Washington in 2013/14. Our cases confirm the deeper institutionalisation and intensification of European diplomatic cooperation abroad. The EU delegations increasingly took over traditional diplomatic tasks and coordinated member states on the ground. The ability of the EU delegations to establish a good working relationship with member states as well as the leadership of key individuals (notably EU ambassadors) were key factors in shaping the way this new system fell into place, which shows the continued prevalence of hybridity in EU foreign policy making.

Keywords

diplomacy; EU foreign policy; EU delegations; United States; Russia

Introduction

Over the past 25 years, EU member states have intensified their foreign affairs cooperation through the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The Lisbon Treaty (2009) is the latest in a series of institutional reforms aimed at a more coherent and efficient EU foreign policy. It emphasized the strengthening of the EU diplomatic toolkit by establishing the European External Action Service (EEAS) and radically reforming the EU's diplomatic representation. The Commission delegations were upgraded to EU delegations (EUDs)¹ to form the diplomatic network of the EEAS in third countries and replace the representative role of the rotating presidency. The EUDs are now diplomatically representing the EU (i.e. its institutions and member states) and work in close cooperation with member states' embassies on the ground. EUDs are intended to add value and provide synergies, but not to replace the diplomatic activities of EU member states.² Given these multi-faceted tasks as well as limitations, we characterize them as 'neither fish nor fowl' – not having the same diplomatic status and tasks as diplomatic representations of states do, but also differing from intergovernmental organisations due to their special relationship to member states.

The Lisbon Treaty and the 2010 decision on the establishment of the EEAS provide little detail about how this new system of EU diplomatic representation is meant to work in practice. This paper, therefore, empirically investigates the functions of EUDs and their interaction with member states' embassies in two key locations: Moscow and Washington. Our research is based on an extensive set of semi-structured interviews conducted with officials of EUDs and member states' embassies in both locations during 2013 and 2014, complemented by a detailed document analysis.³

The role of the EUDs and their distinct diplomatic and coordination tasks are shaped by the peculiar nature of the EU foreign policy system. On the other hand, EUDs also encounter pressures due to the changing global patterns of diplomatic practice and the expectations of other actors, most notably the host country. Our contribution aims to investigate how the EU delegations, in interaction with member states' embassies, have come to define their diplomatic tasks within the EU's hybrid foreign policy system, where the Union's external relations fall under the competence of the delegations, while the task of political representation is shared between the delegations and member states' embassies.

Since the EU is not a state, it does not fit into the traditional categories of a diplomatic actor. Duquet's legal analysis⁴ concerning the constraints of EU diplomatic action imposed by diplomatic law and by EU competences therefore provides a necessary context for this investigation. In spite of legal

¹ For Lisbon Treaty adaptations see Federica Bicchi and Heidi Maurer, 'European Cooperation Abroad: European Diplomatic Cooperation Outside EU Borders. Introduction to the Special Issue', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* vol. 13, no. 1 (2018), xx-xx, this issue.

² For member states relations to the EEAS see Rosa Balfour, Catharina Carta & Kristi Raik (Eds.), *The European external action service and national foreign ministries : convergence or divergence?* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2015).

³ The empirical analysis draws on 17 extensive semi-structured interviews conducted in Moscow, 43 interviews in Washington and numerous informal discussions with EEAS officials in Brussels during 2013 and 2014. All interviews were conducted following a semi-structured interview guide. Direct quotations are included only if approved by the interviewee, and referred to according to the numbered interview as recorded by the authors. To encourage a higher level of openness interviewees were guaranteed anonymity.

⁴ Sanderijn Duquet, 'Bound or Unbridled? A Legal Perspective on the Diplomatic Functions of European Union Delegations', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* vol. 13, no. 1 (2018), xx-xx, this issue.

constraints, at a symbolic level, the EEAS can be seen as a challenge to the ‘boundaries of legitimate state practice’, thus giving rise to ‘symbolic struggles’ that are underpinned by the key question of the role of the state in diplomacy.⁵ The state-centric perception has dominated modern diplomacy, but it has been challenged by increasing global interdependence and the changing nature of statehood, power, and sovereignty. Diplomatic practices have been altered by a number of factors including increased involvement of non-state actors, multilateralisation, increased relevance of a variety of issue-sectors, and the growth of public diplomacy.⁶ While states remain key actors in the institution of diplomacy, they need to adapt to these global developments.

Our analysis distinguishes between two functions of EUDs: *first*, their tasks of traditional diplomatic representation (towards the host country), and *second*, their EU-specific coordination role. Under the first function, the delegations take over traditional diplomatic tasks of formally representing the Union towards the host government and other local actors, act as the eyes and ears of the EU on the ground, and provide regular reporting and analysis. In addition, they engage in outreach and public diplomacy. The second function implies that EUDs are responsible for coordination among member states. Despite the abolishment of the pillars with the Lisbon treaty, the ‘*hybrid structure of EU external relations*’⁷ remains, and EU delegations do not replace national diplomatic structures in order to build towards ‘*some purer state*’ but they are instead tasked ‘*to look for means of coordination and coalition-building within the structure*’.⁸

While the latter objective certainly means an additional responsibility for the EU delegations in the political realm, Bruter shows that also in the past Commission delegations had to reconcile two opposing objectives: on the one hand ‘*developing autonomous areas of influence*’, while on the other hand ‘*transform[ing] conflicting relations with national embassies into fruitful cooperation*’.⁹ Indeed, even before the establishment of the EEAS, cooperation in the field of CFSP moved ‘*beyond intergovernmentalism*’,¹⁰ as evidenced by the emergence of complex transgovernmental networks of policy experts and increased ‘*reflex-coordination*’¹¹. The establishment of the EEAS marks another step ‘*beyond intergovernmentalism*’, towards enhanced coordination and new forms of transgovernmental cooperation. As an institutional innovation, the EEAS is in a ‘*danger of being misconceptualized*’, as it draws upon different organizational principles and practices and has to respond to ‘*conflicting sets of expectations*’.¹² During its first years of existence, the EEAS struggled to gain acceptance and support from

⁵ Rebecca Adler-Nissen, ‘Europe’s New Diplomats: Symbolic Power, the Diplomatic Field and the EU’s External Action Service’, *Review of International Studies* vol. 40, no. 4 (2013), 657-681.

⁶ Simon Duke, ‘Preparing for a European Diplomacy?’, *Journal of Common Market Studies* vol. 40, no. 5 (2002), 849-70; Chris Hill and William Wallace, ‘Diplomatic Trends in the European Community’, *International Affairs* vol. 55, no. 1 (1979), 47-66.

⁷ Michael Smith, ‘Still Rooted in Maastricht: EU External Relations as a ‘Third-generation Hybrid’, *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 34, no. 7 (2012), p. 700.

⁸ Smith, ‘Still Rooted in Maastricht’, p. 713.

⁹ Michael Bruter, ‘Diplomacy without a State: The External Delegations of the European Commission’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1999, p. 193.

¹⁰ Helene Sjursen, ‘Not so intergovernmental after all? On democracy and integration in European Foreign and Security Policy’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 18, no. 8 (2011), 1078-1095.

¹¹ Ana Juncos and Karolina Pomorska ‘Playing the Brussels game: Strategic socialisation in the CFSP Council Working Groups’, *European Integration Online Papers*, vol. 10 no. 11 (2006).

¹² Jozef Batora 2013, ‘The “Mittraillouse Effect”: The EEAS as an Interstitial Organization and the Dynamics of Innovation in Diplomacy’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 51, no. 4: 598-613 (2013).

both EU institutions and member states. The latter, especially the national foreign ministries, have harboured suspicions that the EEAS was competing with their traditional role in diplomacy.¹³

This contribution tackles the first main research focus of this special issue by showing how the functions of the two key EUDs have been institutionalized since 2010. They face competing and sometimes conflicting demands from different actors in the EU foreign policy structures, including the EEAS headquarters, Commission and member states. Apart from structural factors stemming from the hybrid nature of EU external relations, the empirical analysis points to the relevance of personalities especially in the transition phase, when new practices of delegations were being shaped.

The two cases examined below are in many respects atypical among the 131 bilateral EU delegations across the globe. Both are highly political cases, representing the EU *vis-à-vis* major powers. Furthermore, one important area of EU external relations, external assistance, is not present (Washington) or has relatively low relevance (Moscow). In both capitals, all 28 EU member states are represented, with relatively large national embassies and important bilateral relations, which makes the work of EU delegations particularly challenging. At the same time, the delegations in Moscow and Washington are the largest in terms of EEAS staff posted to a single delegation.¹⁴ There are also considerable differences between the two cases. The diplomatic environment in Washington is characterized by constant competition among EU member states to gain the attention of the US administration, although there is broad agreement on the general direction of the transatlantic relationship and the role of the US as an indispensable partner. Russia, by contrast (and not only since the Ukraine crisis), is considered by European diplomats to be one of the most difficult partners in a relationship where the EU has struggled to establish common positions and a unitary voice.¹⁵ Precisely because of the particularly challenging nature (in different ways) of these two locations, one can argue that they offer insightful case studies for assessing the diplomatic functions of the delegations more broadly. If the delegations succeed in representing the EU and finding a space next to member states in these two locations, it is possible elsewhere too.

The empirical analysis below is structured according to the two functions outlined above. The following section investigates how the EU delegations in Moscow and Washington adapted to their additional tasks of diplomatic representation by replacing the rotating presidency also in the political realm, and representing the European Union in the host country. Thereafter we examine the EU-specific role of the delegations to coordinate and be of service to the member states.

EU delegations as the eyes, ears and mouth of the EU – sometimes and under certain conditions

¹³ David Spence and Jozef Batora (eds). *European Diplomacy post-Westphalia*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

¹⁴ Heidi Maurer and Kristi Raik, 'Pioneers of a European Diplomatic System: EU Delegations in Moscow and Washington'. Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) Analysis Brief No. 1, 2014. Accessible at http://www.fia.fi/en/publication/415/pioneers_of_a_european_diplomatic_system/.

¹⁵ Maxine David, Jackie Gower, and Hiski Haukkala, (Eds), *National Perspectives on Russia: European Foreign Policy in the Making?* (London and New York: Routledge: 2013).

The Council decision establishing the EEAS¹⁶ states that EUDs would replace the rotating presidency in representing the EU externally in political matters and in coordinating EU actors on the ground. However, it provided limited instructions concerning the work of the delegations. In practice, it was largely up to the EU ambassadors and their staff to define and implement new working processes in cooperation with the member states.

While both delegations in Washington and Moscow took over considerable new tasks after the Lisbon Treaty, they did not receive a corresponding increase in staff or other resources. Officials working in the political and press sections as well as senior management (ambassador and deputy) became EEAS officials, while other EU delegation staff remained as Commission staff. Commission officials receive their instructions from the Commission, while EEAS staff get theirs from the EEAS headquarters in Brussels and the High Representative. The EU ambassador holds a double-hatted position with authority over both Commission and EEAS staff.¹⁷ EEAS staff in delegations is made up of EEAS officials, seconded national diplomats from the member states, contract agents, and local staff.

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, EUDs became the eyes, ears and mouth of the EU in political affairs. They cultivate contacts, represent EU interests, promote a favourable attitude towards the EU, and report back to headquarters. But they can only do so if the topic at hand falls under exclusive or shared EU competences or builds upon a CFSP decision, i.e. if there is a clear EU position to represent. Furthermore, they operate in cooperation with and in parallel to embassies of the member states. Especially in key locations such as Moscow and Washington, it is out of the question for the EUD to replace the bilateral diplomatic representations of member states.

In areas where EUDs have a role, they have become important diplomatic actors on the ground in both Moscow and Washington. Their staff sends briefing notes to Brussels on a regular basis, they interact with governmental and local actors, and they engage in public outreach activities to inform about the EU. They do so often with better access to local actors than the embassies of most member states. However, the ambiguity stemming from the hybrid nature of EU foreign policy has complicated the efforts of the EUDs to find their place in the broader picture of European representation. For instance, in public discussions in Washington, the EUD was often criticised for taking an obvious or very cautious position, when the issue had not been explicitly agreed with member states' representatives on the ground or in the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels. This is understandable considering the intergovernmental nature of CFSP, but external interlocutors often perceive this role as too vague. Yet, the increased visibility of the EUD has also had a positive symbolic impact, forcing third country interlocutors to recognize that *'the EU is not just a bunch of institutions in Brussels but made up of 28 countries working together'*.¹⁸

¹⁶ Council Decision 2010/427/EU, Art.1.4, OJEU L 201/30, on 3 August 2010.

¹⁷ European Commission / High Representative, 'Joint Decision of the Commission and the High Representative of 28 March 2012 on Cooperation Mechanisms concerning the Management of Delegations of the European Union', Brussels 2013. JOIN (2012) 8 final. See also High Representative, 'EEAS Review', Brussels 2013, accessible at http://eeas.europa.eu/library/publications/2013/3/2013_eeas_review_en.pdf; or European External Action Service, 'EEAS Human Resources Report 2015'. Brussels 2016. Accessible at http://eeas.europa.eu/background/docs/eeas_hr_report_2015.pdf.

¹⁸ Interview No. 30, Washington.

The individual factor mattered during the first years following the Lisbon Treaty. The EU ambassador's leadership, in terms of the personality and vision, significantly shaped how the delegation would approach its new role. In Washington, a new Head of Delegation was appointed in 2010. The choice of person, Vale de Almeida, who was Commission President José Manuel Barroso's former chief of staff, caused initial resentment among member states,¹⁹ which had been pushing for an experienced national diplomat to fill this important post. Yet, to contrast the initial resentment, Almeida emphasized even more strongly the need to be of service to the member states in all areas covered by the EUD and repeatedly reassured national ambassadors that he was not going to infringe on national mandates or interests. It was also helpful that a senior French diplomat, François Rivasseau, was appointed as his deputy. Member states' diplomats perceived him as 'one of us', someone who was able to relate to their concerns and understood how they work. In Moscow, a new Head of Delegation, Fernando Valenzuela, was appointed in 2009. He also had long-standing experience in the Commission and was seen to pursue a cautious, professional, but not very active line in taking over the new functions and in establishing a new relationship *vis-à-vis* the member states' embassies. He was followed in September 2013 by a high-profile Lithuanian diplomat and former foreign minister, Vygaudas Ušackas. The latter introduced a more proactive, ambitious, and visible approach that member states by and large highly valued, but which also met resistance as it was occasionally perceived as overstepping the limits of his mandate.²⁰

Next to representing EU interests, reporting back concise and in-depth analysis to the headquarters became another key task of EU delegations. Some of the staff, notably those posted from the Commission, had to adapt to a new, more diplomatic reporting practice. The link between EUDs and Brussels is complicated by the fact that they have more than one principal to consider. Under the Lisbon Treaty, the EU delegations have been tasked with informing the EEAS, Commission services, and other EU actors such as Members of the European Parliament. Member states' ambassadors are still involved in drafting joint Heads of Mission reports, but it is now the EU delegations that take the lead. There were initially no guidelines for the delegations with regard to political reporting, including no rules on the sharing of reports. Generally, it was up to the Heads of Delegation and their staff to determine how and to what extent they share reports and information, both with member states on the ground and with the headquarters in Brussels. More recently, the delegations were instructed to share as much as they deem possible with member states on the ground. It is then up to the national embassies to integrate the information they receive from the EUD into their reports back to their national foreign ministry.

The intensified contact between EU delegations and member states' diplomats on the ground not only changed the perception of the latter but also led to a different mindset within the delegation, as the following account of Washington illustrates:

The modus operandi of the Delegation has changed considerably since the Lisbon Treaty took effect. Before, when the Delegation was representing only the Commission, it was mostly preoccupied by trade matters, and not in the kind of constant contact with member state embassies that is now routine. [...] This, and recruitment of national diplomats to the EEAS, has implied a huge change in culture and mindset, as well as a big increase in workload. But it has produced results. We have become more political, more like a hub for EU business.²¹

¹⁹ The Washington Times, 2010; The Telegraph, 2010.

²⁰ Interviews with member states' diplomats, Moscow, December 2013.

²¹ Interview No. 30, Washington.

However, in Moscow the picture seems more mixed than in Washington due to the confrontational atmosphere in EU-Russia relations, which has led to member states placing more emphasis on bilateral contacts, for example in addressing trade restrictions.²²

Apart from actively representing the Union, the delegations became an arena where the host government and local partners could reach all EU member states at once: the latter could now use coordination meetings at the EUDs as an efficient way to communicate with the EU28 in one go. The challenges of gaining access were different in Moscow and Washington: in Washington, most EU member states struggle to reach any high-ranking official. Even before the Lisbon Treaty the US had already actively pushed the idea of meeting all EU member states at the same time in the delegation for debriefs and other exchanges. With the new role of the delegation, such exchanges with the EU28 became standard practice. High-level Russian officials, however, were often not keen to address the EU28 together. At the same time, it was difficult for all but the largest member states to gain access to Moscow at all. Russia preferred a 'divide and rule' approach, but inadvertently promoted a sense of unity among member states due to its confrontational tactics and the similarity of problems in bilateral relations with a number of countries (notably trade restrictions).

A successful example of joint representation in Moscow on a politically-sensitive and controversial matter was a hearing in the Russian Duma on the human rights situation in the EU in May 2012. The Head of the EU delegation spoke on behalf of the Union at the hearing. The event was preceded by the lengthy preparation of a joint position by the member states, and the process succeeded in bringing the member states closer together and made them more aware of each other's views. On a more cynical note, human rights are a rare foreign policy issue that member states gladly delegate to the EU, so it does not complicate bilateral political and economic relations.

Yet even the US, while generally supportive of a coordinated EU position, has occasionally preferred bilateral approaches when the EU position was assumed to be unfavourable. Local actors in Washington often criticised the delegation for failing to take a clear stance and act in a decisive manner. This cautious behaviour stemmed from the lack of clarity in the initial mandate and the EUD's reluctance to challenge the role of member states' embassies. In the absence of a clear EU stance, the delegation tried to be involved and visible to the host country, but did not want to be perceived by member states as taking a political stance. Here another observable tension between diplomatic roles of the EU delegation is revealed: on the one hand, it is meant to get the highest access possible and thus has to promote the EU's standing; on the other, member states' diplomats are additionally tasked with ensuring that their country stands out in meetings with the host country.

In key locations such as Washington and Moscow, the EUDs do not in any way challenge or replace bilateral political relations of member states with the host country. After the first few months of getting used to the post-Lisbon system, member states' diplomats reported smooth interaction and valued the work of the EUD.²³ Member states generally appreciated that the EUD took the lead in addressing highly technical issues with the host government, such as financial affairs, food safety and consumer protection, and transport. Surprisingly, member states' diplomats on the ground recognised the role of the EUD post-Lisbon more quickly than the EEAS headquarters in Brussels. Between 2010-12, the link

²² Interviews with member states' diplomats, Moscow, December 2013.

²³ For more empirical details see Heidi Maurer, 'An upgraded EU delegation in a reinforced system of European diplomatic coordination: insights from Washington'. In Spence, David, and Batora, Jozef (eds). *European Diplomacy post-Westphalia*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) pp. 274-287.

between the EUDs and Brussels was weak both top-down and bottom-up. The EUDs were in an ambiguous position because of the lack of clear instructions and/or feedback on their work from Brussels. No clear definition was provided concerning the scope of their competences towards the host administration and *vis-à-vis* member states' embassies, including a clear delimitation on where and when the EUDs can and should take the lead. This often prevented them from acting in a proactive manner, especially in political affairs. Furthermore, the delegations were not always well-informed about relevant Brussels processes and discussions. For example, national embassies often received summaries of the Council meetings in Brussels faster than the delegation staff. National diplomats serving in the delegation had an advantage in this case, since they usually received timely national reporting from their home country's representation to the EU. On the positive side, this initial leeway on the ground seemed to have resulted in stronger ownership among national diplomats and readiness to support the EUDs.

In the bottom-up flow of information, the EUDs' contribution to EU policy was weak during the initial years, but has been gradually improving. It was also felt in the EUDs that the EEAS headquarter could make more regular requests for specific contributions, such as for upcoming summits and other high-level meetings. After the initial build-up phase, the EEAS started paying more attention to the need to develop a stronger and more systematic link between the EUDs and headquarters in order to make better use of the EUDs in EU foreign policy making.²⁴

Our empirics also highlight how, in very different ways, both the US and Russia played a role in pushing member states to take advantage of the work of the EUDs. The attitudes of the host country were shaped by different expectations towards the EU: in case of the US, the delegation was expected to represent a unitary actor and was criticized for not acting like an embassy, whereas in the case of Russia its role was downplayed because it did not represent a unitary state and did not quite function like an embassy. The (geo)political interests of the host country were reflected in their approaches to the EU delegation: while the US wished for the EU to be a more unified partner, Russia displayed a strategic interest to divide Europe.

The EU-specific function of the delegations: Coordinating and being of service to the member states

Besides representing the European Union, the delegations also replaced the rotating presidency in coordinating the European presence on the ground. This role is particular to the European Union's foreign policy system, as the increased coordination between EU institutional and member state actors is aimed at providing added value, coherence, and possibilities for synergies. Coordination attempts took place before the Lisbon Treaty, but depended very much on individual initiatives.

Facilitating exchange and the possibility for socialisation among member states' representatives is a traditional function of the EU negotiation structure in Brussels. The EU delegations in Moscow and

²⁴ See High Representative, 'EEAS Review'.

Washington have paid considerable attention to this aspect of their work. The starting point was challenging, as various rumours were floating around that the EU delegations would overshadow national embassies and even seek to replace them.²⁵ To counter such perceptions, the delegations tried to make themselves useful to the member states, while ensuring that they were not perceived as overstepping the space assigned to them. They stressed their goal of supporting member states through increased coordination and sharing of information on the ground.

The most visible regular activity of the delegations *vis-à-vis* embassies of the member states are the coordination meetings at various levels. Before the Lisbon Treaty, there were monthly meetings at the ambassadorial level, and the presidencies held the prerogative to decide to what extent they would organize meetings at other levels. In the post-Lisbon setting, the meetings take place on a regular basis at different levels: Heads of Mission, their deputies, and heads of sections or counsellors. In Moscow and Washington, member states' diplomats generally appreciated the coordination meetings and acknowledged an improvement. Meetings were considered most useful when they had a well-prepared agenda and a clear purpose, and when meetings of different levels and formats were connected to each other and to the EU policy process. Overall, it is the regular meetings of the Deputy Heads of Mission that are considered to be the linchpin of coordination, as they are responsible for overseeing the work of all other levels.²⁶

Importantly, the interviewed diplomats generally shared the view that the level of ambition was rather low with regard to the impact of coordination and the goal of promoting foreign policy coherence and unity on the ground. This related to the rather broad definition of coordination (i.e. meeting and talking). Meetings were for the most part not aimed at reaching a common position or taking decisions. Many diplomats also noted that EU policy is decided in the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels, not in the field. They would, of course, share their views, report a summary of those discussions back to their capitals, and attempt to influence the decision of their country in a certain manner, but diplomats in the field are generally not meant to decide on foreign policy. In principle this does not, however, prevent the delegations from identifying shared positions on the ground and feeding them back to the capitals and the Brussels machinery.

Member states' diplomats in Moscow and Washington characterized the coordination meetings as valuable for exchanging views, networking, receiving information about the activities of the delegation and other member states, and improving their analysis of what is going on in the partner country, its relations with the EU, and its bilateral relations with other member states. 'Hearing feedback from

²⁵ See for example 'Finnish missions not to be replaced by EU delegations', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland News of 29 July 2011. Accessed: <http://www.formin.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=225717&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>; or 'The EU is stealing Britain's diplomatic influence - and so we must leave', Telegraph 24 June 2015, Accessed: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/eureferendum/11697331/The-EU-is-stealing-Britains-diplomatic-influence-and-so-we-must-leave.html>; also the House of Lords report from 23 March 2013 states that the Minister of Europe in particular emphasized that the EEAS is not going to replace the FCO, which highlights the need to clarify this explicitly.

²⁶ In Moscow, Deputy Heads of Mission meet monthly. In Washington, the deputies meet weekly, while the ambassadors only meet once per month. In the US, a stronger coordination mechanism has been evolving for decades. See Paul Taylor, 'Political Cooperation among the EC member states' Embassies in Washington', *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1980), pp. 28–41.

others', 'enriching one's understanding for certain positions'²⁷ or 'finding out who is concerned by certain issues'²⁸ are just some of the added value that member states diplomats reported in Washington. Additionally, for rotating diplomats who just arrived, those meetings were a highly efficient and quick way of creating networks in a new post.²⁹

The meetings frequently hosted high-level Russian or US guest speakers, including officials, politicians, experts, and activists. In Washington, most member states valued the meetings as an opportunity to gain access to higher levels of state department and White House officials than they would be able to reach on their own. In Moscow, this aspect was somewhat less relevant, since high-level Russian officials were reportedly less keen to address the EU28 together.

Unsurprisingly, it is the smaller and mid-sized member states in particular that experienced the added value and efficiency of coordination and information sharing, as they do not have the same resources as bigger member states.³⁰ They appreciated the opportunities provided by the delegations to receive information from local stakeholders, as the need to follow a broad range of topics often goes beyond what they would be able to manage with their limited staff. Also, for most small to medium sized member states the attraction of EU-28 gave them access on a higher political level:

To give an example about US contacts in the state department: If my UK colleague goes there he probably meets someone quite high up in the hierarchy. If I go there, I will be a level lower; but if we go there as EU we will be one level higher, i.e. at least at the same level like our UK colleague.³¹

This EU-28 meeting power provides added value for member states that would normally not have access at such level and for whom those meetings are a good way to establish contacts with US counterparts that they later can follow up with bilaterally.³² Additionally, it is a convenient way of receiving information at a high level, and it saves member states diplomats time, energy, and human resources that otherwise all 28 would have to invest separately.

There were also, however, challenges with regard to EU coordination on the ground, especially when a hostile environment and/or tensions in relations with the partner country imposed specific demands on the delegation. The lack of a secure meeting room in the delegation was seen as a major problem by some member states in Moscow. The EU delegation in Washington was one of the diplomatic targets exposed to US intelligence service activities, as revealed by Edward Snowden.³³ EU coordination meetings were characterized as 'quasi-public'. In Moscow, some diplomats felt they could not speak openly, for example about domestic developments in Russia. Yet even a secure meeting room would not solve the problem of lack of trust among member states and the concern that whatever is said

²⁷ Interview No. 2, Washington.

²⁸ Interview No. 6, Washington; emphasized also strongly in interview No. 19, Washington.

²⁹ Interview No. 1, Washington.

³⁰ For comparison in diplomatic manpower in Washington see Maurer, 'An upgraded EU delegation', p. 277.

³¹ Interview No. 12, Washington; similar assessment shared in interview No. 14 and No. 19, Washington.

³² Interview 20, Washington.

³³ See, for example, The Guardian, 30 June 2013.

among the 28 might be leaked. Some interviewees noted that highly confidential matters were not likely to be raised at the coordination meetings, whatever the security measures.

Considering the importance of Russia and the US as key international partners, one might have expected significant turf battles between the delegations and member states' embassies. This, however, was not the case. National diplomats appreciated the added value provided by the delegations and were impressed by their quick transition. Before the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission delegations had had few contacts with member states (with some variation among locations), but under the Lisbon Treaty the delegations quickly became hubs for providing services and coordinating the exchange of information between member states. Nevertheless, the role of the delegations should not be exaggerated. They were cautious not to overstep the space that member states allowed them to occupy; and the term 'coordination', as used by the actors involved, did not mostly refer to the adaptation of shared positions, but rather followed a broad understanding of exchanging information, communicating with each other, and exchanging views. The delegations were also constrained by limited resources and considered that they would not be able to take on additional tasks without extra staff. Possible new responsibilities of the delegations in the fields of consular affairs and defence and security matters were discussed, but member states disagreed on the possible role of the delegations.

Member states' perceptions of the EUDs coordination role were ambivalent: on the one hand, they appreciated the service-orientated approach and praised its efficiency. On the other, they criticized the delegations for not sharing enough. For instance, they demanded more transparency with regard to the reports that the delegations were sending to Brussels, which would not be a common practice in the field of diplomacy. Shared reporting might help to promote shared positions, generate trust, and encourage member states to share their information. Nevertheless, it raises the question of how the declared aim of delegations to ensure maximum openness fits with the more traditional diplomatic culture of secrecy and informality, despite the current trends in diplomacy towards increased openness.

In principle, member states claimed to value a proactive role and initiative by the delegations. In practice, however, they were cautious and protective of their own turf, if they felt the delegation was trying to impose a particular view or spoke out in public on a matter where no common EU position had been agreed. Yet the initial worries of member states' diplomats largely disappeared during the early years of the Lisbon Treaty. The delegations quickly proved that they were not about to stage a coup, and were seeking to play a complementary role. The post-Lisbon institutional framework supported the understanding that member states are a constituent part of EU diplomacy. Member states provided legitimacy for EU diplomatic activities on the ground, and it was essential for the delegations to engage with member states' embassies and ensure their ownership. The new role perception of the delegations reinforced a mindset of collective efforts:

Before the Lisbon Treaty it was certainly easy to forget that it was also about the member states. The delegation was doing its stuff but it was not necessarily that we always had member states in mind as well. After the Lisbon Treaty that changed considerably along the lines that we all have to use our resources as smartly as possible.³⁴

This new mindset was not only present in the political domain of CFSP issues, but the service-orientated approach of the delegations also had an impact on their relationship with member states in Community

³⁴ Interview No. 30, Washington.

competences. Commission officials in delegations had to change their attitude and become more open and forthcoming towards member states' embassies. The question remains whether the emphasis on being of added value to the member states and on political aspects of the delegations' work shifts the focus away from, or instead complements, traditional Commission policies.

EU delegations pursuing this role of coordination hub resembles the EU internal patterns of multilateral diplomacy as practiced in Brussels (notably in the Council). The main difference is that no policy decisions are taken in the delegations. Still, scholarly insights from the CFSP experience suggest that increased coordination in Brussels is also an instrument of socialization and community building that leads to 'social integration' through 'day-to-day practices of political cooperation'.³⁵ Regular meetings between and with member states' diplomats in the EU delegation are certainly not a sufficient condition for stronger EU foreign policy, but they can contribute the necessary environment that gradually would allow for socialization and a more strong we-feeling among EU and EU member states' diplomats.

Conclusion

This contribution investigated European diplomatic cooperation abroad in two key cases, Moscow and Washington. The empirical analysis showed the institutionalization of the reinforced role of EU delegations in European diplomatic practices after the Lisbon Treaty. In spite of differences between the two capitals, we found that both EUDs developed in the same direction in terms of finding their new roles. EUDs now act in close cooperation with member states' diplomatic missions. Contrary to some initial hopes or fears – depending on the perspective – they do not aim to replace or compete with national embassies of member states. In their daily work, they continue to emphasize complementarity and added value to national diplomatic services. Concurrently, however, the EUDs are becoming prominent diplomatic actors in the field, with more weight and visibility than most national embassies.

The EU delegations in Moscow and Washington have adopted traditional diplomatic practices and tasks in order to represent the EU, but at the same time they exceed the usual categories of the institution of diplomacy by adding the 'extra-national' task of coordinating the European actors on the ground. The delegations are in a constant balancing act, performing the functions of traditional diplomatic missions while also representing the European Union as a hybrid foreign policy actor.

Our empirical analysis shows that there was a more pragmatic transition on the ground. Compared to reported turf battles happening in Brussels, the falling into place of the adjusted institutional structure worked out more smoothly in third countries. Both case studies showed the importance of the 'individual factor': the personality and vision of the EU ambassador in providing leadership within the EU delegation and reaching out to member states played a crucial role in adopting the new role of the EUDs.

The experience from Moscow and Washington in a comparative dimension also highlights the relevance of the broader EU context: the ability to establish good working relationship with member states turned out to be most crucial for the success of the EU delegations. This reflects the particular nature of EU foreign policy, but also pinpoints a dilemma in EU diplomatic representation: a huge portion of the EU delegation's energy and resources is dedicated to coordinate with and please member states, while the traditional task of diplomatic representation is to focus on the relationship with the host government. As an external factor, the attitude of the host country and the situation in the respective capital certainly matters, but it is not the decisive factor shaping the EU delegations' role: the differences in political relations with Moscow and Washington did not create major differences in the way the delegations operated.

³⁵ Kenneth Glarbo, 'Wide-awake diplomacy: reconstructing the common foreign and security policy of the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1999), pp. 634-651.

In terms of long-term impact, we can preliminarily conclude that there is no evidence to suggest that increased European diplomatic cooperation abroad would lead to a qualitatively new level of integration which could be characterised as centralisation or quasi-federalisation. Rather we observe an intensification of transgovernmental cooperation, with the EU delegations acting as a central hub in coordinating those efforts. As discussed in the introduction to this special issue, European cooperation refers to meeting and talking, exchanging views, and getting to know each other's perspectives. EU delegations are not going to take over the task of diplomatic representation from member states; thus, to apply the concept of integration would be misplaced. However, EU delegations, as illustrated in the cases of Moscow and Washington, make an important contribution to the structures and practices of European diplomacy by linking and blurring the boundaries between the variety of European diplomatic actors, and between the intergovernmental and supranational modes of EU external relations. They are an important and thus far relatively successful part of the EU diplomatic system.